

Responding to a letter of support led by Congresswoman Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) and Senator Dick Durbin, and signed by the entire Illinois delegation, Small Business Administrator Karen Mills announced today that Small Business Administration (SBA) loans will be made available to individuals and small business owners affected by the recent tornado damage throughout Illinois.

"Having personally seen the areas hardest hit by the storms, I've been impressed with the way these communities have come together to rebuild. These loans will help to expedite that process. I am pleased to see that Illinois' request for access to SBA Disaster loans was approved, and if any constituent needs help navigating the process of applying for these loans, I am encouraging them to contact my Joliet office at 815.726.4998," said Halvorson.

SBA Disaster loans are direct loans that assist homeowners and businesses impacted by natural disasters. Individuals may be eligible for up to \$200,000 for the repair or replacement of real estate and \$40,000 to repair or replace personal property, such as a vehicle. Business can apply for loans up to \$2,000,000 for the repair or replacement of real estate, inventories, machinery, equipment and all other physical losses. Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to \$2,000,000 may also be available to certain small businesses and farms for alleviating economic injury caused by the disaster.

"Some businesses might not be able to meet their ordinary financial obligations due to these tornadoes. These loans will assist small business owners in keeping their heads above water while they rebuild," said Halvorson.

Assessment teams from FEMA, IEMA, & the SBA determined that 62 homes were destroyed and 42 others suffered major damage. Another 160 homes were damaged to a lesser extent when the tornadoes hit Streator, Pembroke and other communities in the north central Illinois region. The Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) recently denied Illinois' application for a federal disaster declaration based on their criteria for such a declaration-a decision Halvorson expressed displeasure with. "I supported Illinois' application for a federal disaster declaration, and I'm ready to support the state should it decide to appeal FEMA's decision. My office also stands ready to assist any individuals or business owners who would like to learn more about federal assistance that is available and I encourage affected individuals to contact my office," said Halvorson.